

April 1, 1966

Dr. Alvin F. Coburn
Office of the Dean
New York Medical College
Flower and Fifth Avenue Hospitals
Fifth Avenue at One Hundred and Sixth Street
New York, New York 10029

Dear Dr. Coburn:

I must thank you again for your kindness and thoughtfulness in sending me the photograph of Fred Griffith and the Xerox copy of your letter to Fess Avery. Some time I wonder if you would be interested to write the intellectual history of the interaction of these men. I have always been fascinated on exactly what Griffith thought of his experiment and just how deeply Avery understood the genetic implications in a broader context of what he took up from that. The significance of all these observations was, as you know, somewhat clouded by a semantic confusion about directed mutation in contrast to gene transfer. Griffith seemed quite clear about this.. I have never been able to straighten out in my own mind whether Avery bothered very much about these genetic issues. I have written a little about this in the enclosed remarks, and would be interested to know if you had any comment on the writing.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

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